

## SLING FOR A SHOULDER WEAPON

## RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of  
5 pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/392,463,  
filed March 18, 2003, now U.S. Patent No. \_\_\_\_\_.

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to slings for  
10 shoulder weapons, and particularly for military tactical  
weapons.

It is usually desirable to use a sling to carry  
a military shoulder weapon so it is quickly available and  
ready for use while leaving a soldier's hands free for  
15 performing other tasks when the weapon is not actually in  
use.

Many military rifle slings have been known in  
the past, and some of them have been designed to be  
lengthened readily from a length best adapted for  
20 carrying the weapon to a length best for using the weapon  
while in a particular position. Usually, a sling permits  
a weapon to be raised to a soldier's preferred shoulder.  
Depending on the locality of a target with respect to a  
structure behind which a soldier can be partially  
25 concealed, however, in some cases it is necessary for a  
soldier to shoot with the weapon at his opposite, non-  
preferred shoulder. Preferably, the soldier should be  
able to move the weapon to the non-preferred shoulder  
without having to disengage the sling from his body, but  
30 to do so may require that the sling be lengthened.

Some previously available slings for shoulder  
weapons have been configured for a three point  
attachment, with a first or inner strap portion extending  
along one side or the other of the weapon from its  
35 buttstock to its forestock. A second, or outer, strap

portion that passes around the soldier's body, usually over one shoulder, is fastened to the first strap near the forestock of the weapon, but with its front end releasable to slide rearward along the first strap to give the soldier the additional freedom required to raise the weapon to the non-preferred shoulder. In such slings the second strap portion of the sling, when released to slide along the inner strap, moves so as to surround the body of the soldier more closely, increasing the difficulty of removing the weapon quickly should that be required. Also, previously available devices for releasing and reengaging the sliding end of the second strap have been less than desirably easy to operate, particularly for a soldier wearing gloves.

When soldiers are to be transported by motor vehicle, it may be preferable to detach slings from their tactical weapons to avoid entanglement of the slings that would make quick use of the weapons difficult upon rapid exit from the vehicle, or might interfere with quickly emerging from the vehicle.

Many previously available arrangements for attaching the rear end of a sling to a rifle buttstock have been cumbersome and complicated, and take more time than is desired for disconnection and reconnection. Also, many previously used sling and connectors have been undesirably noisy.

One previously available sling is a tactical weapons sling available from Safety Systems Corporation of Hanover Park, Illinois. That sling includes an enlargement at one point along a first or inner sling strap, and a quick release plate is ordinarily held by sling strap tension in an orientation in which the quick release plate cannot move along the inner sling strap past the enlargement.

A carbine sling available from Boonie Packer Products division of JFS, Inc. of Salem, Oregon, utilizes a piece of flexible strapping which becomes doubled-over and jams behind a slide to keep a front end of a sling strap in the usual configuration. The doubled loop of strapping must be pulled forward from the slide to release the movable front end to slide along the inner sling strap, but this requires a significant pull toward the front end of the weapon, causing a slight delay before the sliding front end of the sling can be moved rearwardly along the inner sling strap.

It is desired, then, to have a sling that is easily and quickly lengthened when desirable, that is easily disconnected to permit removal from around a person's body, and that is easily detachable from and reattached to a weapon.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention overcomes the aforementioned shortcomings of previously available slings for military shoulder weapons by providing a sling of which a portion is in the form of a strap extending through a strap slide aperture and then doubling back along its own length for at least some distance to a position where its traveling end is held releasably by engagement of a quick release plate with an engagement member attached to a main portion of the strap. The quick release plate is normally held generally parallel with the main portion of the strap by tension in the sling. Reorientation of the quick release plate to a position generally perpendicular to the main portion of the sling allows a part of the engagement member to flex and thus release the quick release plate from the engagement member, allowing the quick release plate to slide along the sling strap toward the strap slide

aperture and allowing the doubled portion of the sling strap to move through and then away from the slide aperture, thus increasing the effective length of the sling.

5           In one preferred embodiment of the invention, the engagement member is a length of webbing material attached to the main portion of the sling strap with a flexible free end tab directed away from the doubled portion of the sling strap.

10          As another aspect of the invention, a mounting loop for fastening an end of a sling to a shoulder weapon includes a non-slipping fastening arrangement.

15          As yet a further aspect of the present invention, an emergency release latching device permits a portion of the sling to be detached quickly from an intermediate part of the sling so that the sling can be removed quickly from around a person's body.

20          The foregoing and other objectives, features and advantages of the invention will be more readily understood upon consideration of the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments of the invention, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

25          BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a view of the torso of a soldier carrying an automatic rifle equipped with a sling which is one preferred embodiment of the present invention, with the automatic rifle in a high carry position and the sling extending over the soldier's right shoulder.

30          FIG. 2 is a view of the torso of a soldier carrying an automatic rifle equipped with the sling shown in FIG. 1, but with the rifle in a horizontal carry position and the sling extending over the soldier's left shoulder.

FIG. 3 is a side view of the torso of a right-handed soldier holding an automatic rifle at his left shoulder, with the sling shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 in its extended configuration.

5 FIG. 4 is a plan view of the sling shown in FIGS. 1-3 in its normal configuration.

FIG. 5 is a side elevational view of the sling shown in FIG. 4.

10 FIG. 6 is an isometric view of the front end of the automatic rifle and sling shown in FIGS. 1-3, at an enlarged scale, showing a front attachment loop assembly connecting the front end of the sling to the forestock of the automatic rifle.

15 FIG. 7 is a sectional view of a detail of the sling shown in FIG. 1 including the quick release plate, taken along line 7-7 in FIG. 4.

FIG. 8 is a view similar to that of FIG. 7, but with the quick release plate moved to an orientation perpendicular to the main portion of the sling strap.

20 FIG. 9 is a view similar to FIG. 7 showing the quick release plate adjacent the engagement member but disengaged from it and free to move along the main portion of the sling strap.

25 FIG. 10 is a view similar to FIG. 4, showing a sling which is an alternative embodiment of the invention, in its normal configuration.

FIG. 11 is a side elevational view of the sling shown in FIG. 10.

30 FIG. 12 is an isometric view taken from the lower right front, of the front attachment loop assembly shown in FIG. 6 fastened to a sling swivel beneath the front sight of the automatic rifle shown in FIGS. 1-3.

35 FIG. 13 is a front end elevational view of the automatic rifle shown in FIGS. 1-3, showing the front attachment loop arrangement shown in FIG. 12, with the

front end of the sling attached thereto as shown in FIG. 6.

FIG. 14 is a side elevational view of a portion of a military rifle, showing a sling attachment device fastened to the front sight of the rifle.

FIG. 15 is an isometric view of the rear end of the buttstock of a rifle such as that shown in FIGS. 1-3, showing a sling mounting loop assembly mounted on the buttstock and showing the connection of the sling to it.

FIG. 16 is an end elevational view of the buttstock and the sling mounting loop assembly shown in FIG. 15.

FIG. 17 is a side view of a military carbine, showing the attachment of the rear end of a sling such as that shown in FIGS. 1-5 to the buttstock of the carbine.

FIG. 18 is an isometric view of the rear end of a buttstock of a military rifle with a different sling mounting loop assembly mounted on the buttstock and engaged with the rear sling swivel of the weapon, as seen from the lower right rear of the buttstock.

FIG. 19 is an isometric view of the portion of a buttstock and the sling mounting loop assembly shown in FIG. 18, as seen from the lower left rear of the buttstock.

FIG. 20 is a view of the strap fastening arrangement of the sling mounting loop assembly in FIG. 18, fastened in an alternative arrangement.

FIG. 21 is a left side view of an automatic rifle equipped with an alternative sling embodying a further aspect of the present invention.

FIG. 22 is an isometric view of the front end of the automatic rifle and sling shown in FIG. 21, at an enlarged scale, showing a front attachment loop assembly and an emergency quick disconnect assembly which are parts of the sling.

FIG. 23 is an isometric view showing the quick disconnect assembly in a disconnected condition and a traveling end portion of the sling released from the front end portion of the sling.

5 FIG. 24 is a sectional view, taken in the direction indicated by line 24-24 in FIG. 22, showing the portions of the sling shown in FIG. 23, with the quick release slide plate rotated to release the traveling end portion of the sling to slide rearward along a main portion of the sling, and with the emergency release latching assembly secured.

10 FIG. 25 is an isometric view showing the attachment of the sling shown in FIG. 21 to the buttstock of the automatic rifle, at an enlarged scale.

15 FIG. 26 is an isometric view of the portions of the sling shown in FIG. 25, separated from each other and removed from the automatic rifle.

20 FIG. 27 is a detail view at an enlarged scale, showing the insertion of a toggle element into a D-ring to fasten two sling parts to each other.

25 FIG. 28 is an isometric view of a portion of the main strap member of the sling together with the quickly detachable sling end mounting loop assembly for attaching the strap member of the sling to an object such as a weapon.

30 FIG. 29 is an isometric view of the portions of the sling shown in FIG. 21 that attach the front end portion of the sling to an object such as the forestock of an automatic rifle.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring now to the drawings which form a part of the disclosure herein, in FIG. 1 a military shoulder weapon, in this case an automatic rifle 22, is carried by

a soldier, supported by a sling 24 attached to the automatic rifle 22 and arranged to extend from the buttstock 26 over the soldier's right shoulder, around his back, and to the forestock 28, supporting the 5 automatic rifle 22 in a high carry position which enables a right-handed soldier to raise the automatic rifle 22 quickly to his right shoulder and there to grip the pistol grip 30 with his right hand and support the forestock 28 with his left hand. A person using such a 10 sling can thus raise the automatic rifle 22 quickly to his preferred shoulder in the usual shooting position while the sling 24 remains in its normal configuration arranged to support the automatic rifle 22 in the high carry position. A buttstock sling mounting loop assembly 15 32 includes a short attachment strap 34 to which a D-ring 36 is fastened to receive the rear end 38 of the sling 24. The rear end 38 of the sling 24 is thus attached to the right side of the buttstock 26, holding it close to the soldier's chest, as shown in FIG. 1.

20 A front attachment loop assembly 40 attaches the front end 42 of the sling 24 to the forestock 28 of the automatic rifle 22. A quick release plate 44 may be utilized as will be explained presently to extend the length of the sling 24 quickly and silently to an 25 increased length.

In FIG. 2, the automatic rifle 22 is shown as it would be carried by a right-handed soldier, in a horizontal carry position, with the sling 24 extending from the buttstock 26, passing under the soldier's right arm, around his back, and down over his left shoulder to the forestock 28. The quick release plate 44 is further 30 from the front attachment loop assembly 40 than its position as shown in FIG. 1, as will be explained in greater detail presently. The extended length of the

sling 24 is great enough to permit the automatic rifle to be raised easily to either shoulder.

In some situations, it becomes desirable for a soldier to shoot a shoulder weapon such as the automatic rifle 22 from his non-preferred shoulder. Thus, in FIG. 5, a soldier is holding the automatic rifle 22 to his left shoulder, although the sling 24 is arranged to extend from the buttstock 26 over the soldier's right shoulder as shown in FIG. 1, where the automatic rifle 22 10 is supported in the high carry position used by a right-handed shooter.

The sling 24, used in its ordinary configuration for a high carry as shown in FIG. 1, is too short to permit the buttstock 26 to be placed readily at 15 a right handed shooter's left shoulder as shown in FIG. 3. However, the length of the sling 24 can quickly and quietly be extended to that shown in FIG. 2, to permit a right-handed soldier to quickly place the automatic rifle on his left shoulder as shown in FIG. 3 in order, for 20 example, to shoot around the left end of a protecting wall without exposing his body completely beyond the wall..

Referring to FIGS. 4 and 5, the sling 24 is shown shortened by omission of parts of the longer strap 25 portions, in order to more clearly illustrate the way in which its parts are interconnected. At the rear end 38, an elongate rear strap portion 46 may be of a suitable flexible webbing such as a well-known flat, nylon webbing that is about 1 inch wide and 0.08 inch thick. A front 30 end of the rear strap portion 46 is sewn or otherwise fastened to form a loop 48 engaging the curved side of a pair of plastic D-rings 50. The D-rings 50 are provided as a pair to ensure ample strength for unusual situations although one is sufficient for normal loads. The rear 35 strap portion 46 extends rearwardly from the D-rings 50

through a fastener such as a metal tribar slide 52 to form an elongate rear end adjustable loop 54. The rear end adjustable loop 54 passes through a connector such as a pair of loops 53 which are part of a sling attachment stopper device 55 that will be explained subsequently. 5 The adjustable loop 54 permits the overall length of the sling 24 to be adjusted to fit the particular weapon and soldier and to accommodate possible different ways of attaching the rear end 38 of the sling 24 to the buttstock of a weapon, or of attaching the front end 42 of the sling 24 to a forward portion of a weapon. 10

Extension of the Sling

Extending forward from the D-rings 50 is an 15 elongate quickly extendible front strap portion 56 of the sling 24. The front strap portion 56 may be of webbing material similar to that of the rear strap portion 46 and is held by a metal front tribar slide 58 or other suitable fastener to form an adjustable fastening loop 60 20 by which the front end 42 of the sling 24 may be attached to the front attachment loop assembly 40 or otherwise fastened to the forward portion of a weapon such as the automatic rifle 22.

25 A main portion 62 of the quickly extendible front strap portion 56 extends rearwardly from the front end 42 which is fixed to the forward part of a weapon, and passes through the D-rings 50. The opening within the D-rings 50 acts as a strap slide aperture 64 through 30 which the front strap portion 56 can slide easily around the straight side of the D-rings 50.

An extension portion 66 of the extendible front strap portion 56 is doubled back toward the front end 42, alongside the main portion 62, and has a traveling end 68 35 fastened to a quick release plate 70, as by being sewn to

form a loop. It will be understood that the traveling end 68 of the extension portion of the strap could be fastened to the quick release plate 70 by other means, as by being molded into a quick release plate 70 of suitable  
5 plastic construction. In the present embodiment, however, a readily available tribar slide of molded plastic construction is used as the quick release plate 70, and the traveling end 68 is fastened to one of the side bars of the tribar slide, as shown in FIGS. 4 and 5.

10 The quick release plate 70 defines a slot 72, between its center bar and the side bar to which the traveling end 68 of the front strap portion 56 is attached, and the main portion 62 extends through the slot 72 alongside the loop in the traveling end 68, on a  
15 side of the front strap portion 56 which ordinarily faces toward the forestock of a weapon, such as the automatic rifle 22, to which the sling 24 is connected.

On an opposite or outer side 74 of the extendible front strap portion 56, an engagement member  
20 76 is securely attached to the main portion 62. The engagement member 76 has a flexible free front flap portion 78 that extends away from the strap slide aperture 64 and toward the front end 42 of the sling 24. The engagement member 76 is of strong resiliently  
25 flexible material, and may preferably be of a tightly woven flat webbing material thinner than the webbing material of the front strap portion 56 but less easily flexible. The webbing is doubled back on itself to provide a loop acting as the front flap 78, although such a loop is not necessary, and the engagement member 76 could be made of another material if desired, so long as it is not excessively flexible. The engagement member 76 is securely fastened to the main portion 62, as by being  
30 sewn thereto.

As may also be seen in FIGS. 6 and 7, a front portion 79 of the quick release plate 70 adjacent the slot 72 rests between the front flap 78 and the outer side 74 of the main portion 62 of the strap. When the 5 sling 24 is in use, with tension in the extension portion 66 and the main portion 62, the quick release plate 70 lies alongside and generally parallel with the main portion 62 in which it causes a small bend, as shown in FIG. 7. The front flap 78 is thus on one side of the 10 front portion 79 of the quick release plate 70, while the outer side 74 of the main portion 62 is on the other side, and the engagement member 76 thus prevents the quick release plate 70 from moving along the main portion 62 away from the front end 42 of the sling 24. The width 15 80 of the slot 72 is small enough that tension in the extension part 66 keeps the quick release plate 70 oriented generally parallel with the main portion 62, with relatively little force directed toward the front flap 78, so that movement of the quick release plate 70 20 along the main portion 62 is effectively resisted by the engagement member 76.

The front strap portion 56 of the sling 24 can be quickly extended in length, however, by releasing the quick release plate 70 from engagement with the 25 engagement member 76. This is accomplished by grasping the front portion 79 of the quick release plate and moving it from closely alongside the main portion 62 to a position approaching perpendicularity with the main portion 62, as shown in FIG. 8. This movement of the 30 quick release plate 70 presents the slot 72 more widely open toward the front flap 78, so the quick release plate 70 can flex the front flap 78 toward the attached portion of the engagement member 76 and thus toward the strap slide aperture 64 in the D-rings 50. This allows the 35 quick release plate 70 to move along the main portion 62

away from the front end 42 and toward the strap slide aperture 64, with the extension portion 66 then sliding through the strap slide aperture 64 of the D-rings 50 to increase the effective length of the quickly extendible front strap portion 56. The length of the extension portion 66 is effectively added to the length of the main portion 62 by allowing the quick release plate 70 to slide back to the D-rings 50. The front portion 79 of the quick release plate 70 can easily be grasped by a soldier, even when wearing gloves, to rotate it to the position shown in FIG. 8 and thus allow the quickly extendible front strap portion 56 to be extended.

In order to restore the length of the sling 24 to the shorter ordinary configuration allowing the automatic rifle 22 to be carried in the high carry position shown in FIG. 1, it is necessary to move the traveling end 68 and the quick release plate 70 along the extension portion 66 of the strap, pulling it back through the strap slide aperture 64, and then along the main portion 62 to the engagement member 76, in the direction indicated by the arrow 82 in FIG. 9. When the slot 72 of the quick release plate 70 has been moved past the entire engagement member 76, including the front flap 78, tension applied to the quick release plate 70 through the traveling end 68 of the extension portion 66 can draw the quick release plate 70 once more into the position shown in FIG. 7, to retain the traveling end 68 of the extension portion 66 adjacent the engagement member 76, with the sling thus in its shorter ordinary length configuration.

#### Alternative Sling

A sling 86 shown in FIGS. 10 and 11 is an alternative to the sling 24 and may be of the same materials and include similar components, but is arranged

slightly differently. At a rear end 87 of the sling 86, a rear strap portion 88 has its rear end fashioned into an adjustable loop 90 held by a tribar slide 92 corresponding with the tribar slide 52 of the sling 24.

5 The adjustable loop 90 extends through linking loops 94 of a sling attachment stopper device 55, although it could otherwise be engaged with a buttstock of a weapon with which the sling 86 is to be used.

A quickly extendible front strap portion 98 of the sling 86 is similar to the quickly extendible front strap portion 56 in the sling 24, but is oriented in the opposite direction. A fixed first end of its main portion 100 thus is an integral extension of the rear strap portion 88, and an engagement member 76 has its front flap 78 directed toward the rear strap portion 88. The main portion 100 extends forward from the rear strap portion 88 toward the front end 104 of the sling 86, and passes slidably through a strap slide aperture 106 defined by a pair of D-rings 108 which may be similar to the D-rings 50. An extension portion 110 doubles back along the main portion 100 toward the rear strap portion 88, along the inner side of the main portion 100, the side that faces toward the weapon when the sling 86 is in place. As in the sling 24, the engagement member 76 is located on the opposite, outer side 112 of the main portion 100, facing away from a weapon on which the sling 86 is installed. A traveling end 114 of the extension portion 110 is attached securely to a quick release plate 116 which may be identical to the quick release plate 70 described with respect to the sling 24.

Operation of the quickly extendible front strap portion 98 to extend the length of the sling 86 is the same as that described above with respect to the sling 24 and shown in FIGS. 7, 8, and 9, except that extension of the sling 86 is accomplished by releasing the quick

release plate 116 to move forward from the engagement member 76 toward the front end 104 of the sling 86.

A short front end sling mounting strap 118 has its free end adjustably and releasably held by a tribar slide 120, forming an adjustable fastening loop 121 to permit attachment of the front end 104 of the sling 86 to a forward portion of a weapon. The other end of the front end sling mounting strap 118 is fastened securely to the curved side of the pair of D-rings 108, as by being sewn to itself in the form of a loop 122, to support the D-rings 108 so that the quickly extendible front strap portion 98 can slide freely through the strap slide aperture 106 and around the straight side of the D-rings 108.

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#### Front End Attachment

As shown in FIGS. 6, 12, and 13, the front end 42 of the sling 24 is attached to the forestock 28 by engagement of the adjustable loop 60 in a sling receiving aperture 124 defined by the front end attachment loop assembly 40. The front end attachment loop assembly 40 includes a first, or outer, flexible elongate tension carrying member such as a strap portion 126 whose opposite ends are interconnected with each other by a releasable and adjustable fastener such as a tribar slide 128, so that the strap member 126 fits snugly about the forestock 28 or other forward part of a weapon to which the sling 24 or sling 86 is to be attached. A small bight 130 of the outer elongate flexible strap 126 extends through the eye of a sling swivel 132, where it is held in place by a slotted stopper plate 134 through whose slots the outer strap 126 extends, to keep the front end attachment loop assembly 40 in a desired position with respect to the sling swivel 132. The stopper plate 134 is small enough to pass through the eye

of the sling swivel 132 lengthwise, but once subjected to tension in the outer strap 126, the stopper plate 134 aligns itself with the sling swivel and holds the bight 130 within the eye of the sling swivel 132, while the 5 outer strap 126 is held by the tribar slide 128. An inner strap member 136 extends along a part of the outer strap 126, between it and the forestock 28. The inner strap 136 is attached to the outer strap 126 at two locations spaced apart by a great enough distance to 10 define a sling receiving aperture 124 with a preferred length in the range of one inch to two inches, to receive and hold the strap 126. The position of the outer strap 126 in the stopper plate 134 can be adjusted to place the aperture 124 at either side of the forestock 28, as shown 15 in FIGS. 6 and 13, or to adjust it further toward the top of the forestock 28 if desired.

The inner strap 136 preferably extends beyond the aperture 124 and is fastened to the outer strap 126 to form a similar second strap receiving aperture 125. 20 This arrangement may be particularly useful for a shoulder weapon having a sling swivel on a side of its forestock rather than the bottom of its barrel. With a bight 130 of the strap 126 attached to such a sling swivel the aperture 124 could then be on the top of the forestock and the aperture 125 would be about 180° away 25 around the forestock, opposite the sling swivel. Thus the sling 24 could be advantageously used by a soldier preferring to carry and shoot a right-handed weapon left-handedly.

30 In one preferred embodiment of the attachment loop assembly 40, the outer strap 126 may be of a tubular webbing material, such as a readily available one-half inch wide tubular nylon webbing, and a ribbon 138 of a strong heat-resistant material, such as a half inch wide 35 woven tape of Kevlar polyamide aramid fabric, is

preferably housed as a core within the webbing material. Such a material is desired as a core within the outer strap 126 in order to preserve the integrity of the connection of the sling 24 to the forestock of a military weapon which may become so hot with continued firing of the weapon that a front attachment loop assembly 40 made of a material with a low melting point might fail just when it is most needed. While the problem of high temperature has been answered in the past by use of metal sling fittings, such fittings often rattle with a sound which might easily be heard by an adversary, while the front attachment loop assembly 40, since it is of largely fabric construction, provides a nearly silent attachment of a sling to a weapon.

A sling attachment device 144 for military weapons which do not include a sling swivel at their forward ends is shown in FIG. 14. The loop 60 at the front end 42 of the sling 24, or the loop 121 at the front end 104 of the sling 86, can be fastened around a pair of D-rings 142 included in the sling attachment device 144, in which an elongate flexible tension carrying member, such as a cord or narrow strap 146, has at least one end 148 securely fastened to a D-ring or a pair of D-rings 142 so that the strap 146 can be used to fasten the D-ring or D-rings 142 to a desired part of a weapon. Like the strap 126 of the attachment loop assembly 40, the strap 146 preferably has a core 149 of a strong heat-resistant material such as Kevlar polyamide aramid.

Preferably, both of the opposite ends 148 of the strap 146 are securely fastened to the D-rings 142, so that the strap 146 forms a loop which can be hitched securely around the desired part of a weapon to which a sling is to be attached, such as the vertical front part 150 of a front sight of the automatic rifle 22. In order to avoid unnecessary and undesirable noise caused by the

connection of the sling to a weapon, a silencing hood 152 is provided around the D-rings 142, attached, for example, to the strap 146. Preferably, the silencing hood 152 is a short, thin-walled tube of a soft or 5 resiliently flexible material capable of absorbing an impact and deadening the sound that would otherwise be made. For example, a short length of thin-walled rubber tubing material similar to bicycle tire inner tube material is satisfactory as the silencing hood 152, although leather or fabric could also be used. At the 10 end of the tube opposite its attachment to the strap 146, an open mouth 154 permits the adjustable sling strap loop 60 to be inserted and threaded through the D-rings 142 to attach the sling 24 to the attachment device 144.

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#### Rear End Attachment

The sling 24 is attached to the buttstock 26 of the automatic rifle 22, as shown in FIGS. 1, 15, and 16, by the buttstock sling mounting loop assembly 32. The 20 buttstock sling mounting loop assembly 32 includes a stock-encircling strap 158. Preferably the stock-encircling strap 158 is of tightly woven flat webbing of synthetic material such as a non-elastic nylon so that it is not readily stretched.

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A first end portion of the stock-encircling strap 158 defines a loop 160 fastened about the middle bars of at least one, and preferably a pair of tribar slides 162, which may be of sheet metal and are held stacked together by the loop 160 extending through a pair 30 of parallel slots between the middle and outer bars of the tribar slides 162. While the pair of tribar slides 162 has shown superior performance, a single tribar slide 162 may also prove to be satisfactory. The loop 160 is preferably formed by stitching through the material of

the strap 158. The loop 160 lies along a first face of the pair of tribar slides 162, between them and the buttstock 26.

5 A stopper plate 164 similar to the stopper plate 134 is fitted onto the strap 158 about three to five inches away from the loop 160, with a bight 166 of the strap 158 extending through the eye of a rear sling swivel 170, where it is held in place by the stopper plate 164. A slide loop, and preferably a pair of rigid, 10 generally rectangular slide loops 168, of a molded high strength plastic material, encircle the doubled portion of the first end of the strap 158 adjacent to the stacked tribar slides 162.

15 The strap 158 extends from the slide loop or loops 168 downward along the side of the buttstock 26 to the sling swivel 170, and then up and along the opposite side of the buttstock 26 to its top. After passing around the top of the buttstock 26, an upper portion 171 of the strap 158 extends along and into the pair of 20 stacked slides 162 on their first face from the direction opposite the loop 160. The upper portion 171 passes through the tribar slides 162, as seen best in FIG. 16. The tribar slides 162 thus fasten together the first end 25 of the strap 158 and the upper portion 171 of the strap 158. The strap 158 continues from the tribar slide or stacked tribar slides 162 through the slide loops 168, and a D-ring 172 is attached securely to a free second end part 174 of the strap 158, as by a loop sewn into it.

30 The stopper plate 164 in the bight 166 engaged in the rear sling swivel 170 holds the buttstock attachment loop 32 in a desired position on the buttstock 26. Tension in the free end part 174, when it acts through and on the slide loops 168, tends to tighten the

engagement of the tribar slide or slides 162 on the strap 158, as the slide loop or loops 168 are urged along the first end portion of the strap member 158 toward and against the stacked tribar slides 162 by tension in the 5 free end portion 174. The downwardly extending upper portion 171 of the strap 158 is thus pulled through the stacked tribar slides 162, tightening the stock-encircling strap 158 around the buttstock 26. When the free end portion 174 is allowed to become slack, the 10 stacked slides 162 act as a buckle and secure the strap 158 around the buttstock 26, maintaining tension in the upper portion 171. By selectively orienting the bight 166 within the eye of the sling swivel 170, the loop 160 and attached tribar slides 162 can be placed on either 15 side of the buttstock 26, as desired.

The adjustable loop 54 of the rear strap portion 46 of the sling 24 or the adjustable loops 90 of the rear strap portion 88 of the sling 86 can be attached directly to the D-ring 172, by disengaging an end of the 20 strap from the respective tribar slide 52 or 92 and refastening it with the strap extending through the D-ring 172. Alternatively, a stopper assembly 55 can be attached similarly to the rear strap portion 46 or rear strap portion 88 by engaging the rear strap portion 25 through a loop or pair of loops 53 included in the stopper assembly 55.

#### Sling Mounting Stopper

In one preferred embodiment, as shown in 30 FIG. 15, the stopper device 55 includes a short strap 182 of suitable webbing material, such as that of the sling straps 46 and 88, attached to the middle bar of a stopper plate in the form of a tribar slide 184 which may be of sheet metal. The strap 182 is also looped through and

around one side of the plastic loops 53, attaching the loops 53 to the tribar slide 184, by a length of doubled strap 182 separating it from the loops 53 by a distance 186 of, for example, about 3 inches, although the 5 distance 186 is not critical. Preferably, the loops 53 are held more closely than the tribar slide 184, which preferably has some freedom to move and for the loop of strap material 182 to which it is attached to be flexed and move about the middle bar of the tribar slide 184 to 10 equalize the stresses in the opposite sides of the loop engaging the middle bar.

A flexible securing tab 188 of ribbon-like webbing material, such as a tightly woven non-stretch nylon webbing material about as wide as the strap 182, is fastened as a small loop 190 encircling a side bar 192 of 15 the tribar slide 184. The short end 194 of the webbing material forming one side of the loop 190 extends through the slot between the side bar 192 and the middle bar of the tribar slide. The short end portion 194 lies closely 20 along and in contact with the portion of the strap 182 that passes around the middle bar of the tribar slide 184, when the free end 196 extends through a slot 198 between the middle bar and the side bar opposite the side bar 192, as shown most clearly in FIG. 15. The short end 25 portion 194 thus causes the securing tab 188 to form a considerable hump above the portion of the strap 182 that passes around the middle bar of the tribar slide 184, as shown in FIGS. 5 and 11, when the free end 196 is pulled tight through the slot 198 to the side of the tribar 30 slide 184 from which the strap 182 extends toward the loops 53.

As shown in FIG. 16, when the free end 196 of the securing tab 188 is free from the slot 198, the securing tab 188 may be pulled away from the strap 182 to

make the tribar slide 184 lie closely alongside the doubled part of the strap 182 leading toward the loops 53. The combined thickness of the doubled strap 182 and the tribar slide 184 is small enough that the tribar 5 slide 184 and the strap 182 can be pulled through a relatively narrow slot, with the tribar slide 184 in an edgewise orientation, leaving the loops 53 on one side of the material defining the slot while the tribar slide 184 is on the opposite side. Thereafter, when the free end 10 196 extends through the slot 198 the securing tab 188 is pulled snugly around the middle bar of the tribar slide 184, the combination acts as a stopper plate and is too thick to pass through such a narrow slot. Additionally, when the loop 190 or the free end 196 encounters a 15 surface of the object, such as the D-ring 172, defining the slot or opening through which the strap 182 extends, the tribar slide 184 is urged into a position as shown in FIG. 11 in which its major plane is oriented transverse to the portion of the strap 182 that extends away from 20 the middle bar of the tribar slide 184, further preventing the stopper from passing back through the slot or opening in the opposite direction.

Such a stopper assembly 55 could be used at either or both of the ends 38 and 42 of the sling 24 or 25 the ends 87 and 104 of the sling 86, to attach the sling 24 or 86 to a front attachment loop 40, attachment device 144, or a buttstock sling mounting loop 32.

The stopper assembly 55 is particularly useful, as shown in FIG. 17, for attaching a sling 24 to the 30 buttstock 202 of a military carbine. The buttstock 202, instead of having the traditional shape of a wooden buttstock, includes a tubular portion 204 and a flat web 206 extending downward from the tubular portion 204 and

defining a slot 208, in which a stopper assembly 55 is engaged to attach a sling 24 to the carbine.

Alternative Rear End Attachment

5 An alternative mounting loop assembly 210 for fastening a sling 24 or the like to a buttstock 26 of a shoulder weapon includes a stock-encircling strap 212, preferably of closely woven fabric such as a strong non-stretch nylon webbing, whose opposite ends define  
10 respective loops 214 and 216 facing each other and separated by a small distance 218 when the mounting loop assembly is in place on a buttstock 26 of a shoulder weapon. A small bight 220 of the strap 212 extends through the sling swivel 170, where it is held in place  
15 by a slotted stopper plate 222 mounted on the strap 212.

A fastener assembly interconnecting the loops 214 and 216 adjustably with each other includes a first end piece in the form of a bar 224 extending through the first loop 214 and a second piece in the form of a generally U-shaped member 226 engaged in the second loop 216. A pair of screws 228 are engaged rotatably in respective through-bores 230 defined near the ends of the bar 224 and parallel with each other. The screws 228 are engaged in mating threads in the leg portions 232 of the 20 U-shaped member 226. With the leg portion 232 oriented as shown in FIG. 18, facing toward the bar 224, the threads of the screws 228 are received within the threads in the facing leg portions 232, and the screws 228 can be adjusted to tighten the strap 212 around the buttstock  
25 16. The legs 232 cover the threads and the ends of the screws 228 so that they are not openly exposed to catch on the surroundings of a weapon on which the mounting loop assembly 210 is used. The bar 224 and the U-shaped member 226 are preferably of a strong plastic material in  
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order to be quieter than metal and not be subject to corrosion.

The mounting loop assembly can be attached so that the fastener assembly can be placed on either side of the buttstock 26 by rotation of the bight 220 within the eye of the sling swivel 170, and the position of the strap 212 in the stopper plate 222 can be adjusted as necessary to place the fastening assembly where desired.

On the opposite side of the buttstock 26, a sling strap receptacle 234 is fastened to the strap 212. The receptacle 234 may be in the form of a length of tubular webbing doubled over along itself and forming a slot 236 to receive a strap or to engage a stopper 55 described above. Preferably, a small rod 238 is retained within an outer leg of the tubular webbing material to provide a stable, stiffened shoulder to receive a strap or the stopper plate 184 of a stopper 55. The rod 238 may, for example, be of a hard plastic material.

Where the distance 218 between the loops 214 and 218 in opposite ends of the sling mounting loop assembly 210 is short, exposing the ends of the screws 228, the orientation of the U-shaped member 226 may be reversed, and the leg portions 232 of the U-shaped member 226 may be directed away from the bar 224 engaged in the strap loop 214, as shown in FIG. 20, to provide a protective covering for the threaded ends of the screws 228 when they are adjusted to tighten the strap 212 adequately around a buttstock.

### 30      Alternative Sling

Referring now to FIGS. 21-28, additional aspects of the invention are embodied in a sling 250 shown mounted on the automatic rifle 22. A rear end portion 252 of the sling 250 is attached to the buttstock

26 by a buttstock attachment loop assembly 254. The buttstock attachment loop assembly is fastened to the rear sling swivel 170 of the automatic rifle 22 by a sling swivel attachment device 256 including a stopper  
5 similar to the stopper device 55 described previously. A quickly detachable sling end mounting loop assembly 258 interconnects a main strap member 260 of the sling with the buttstock attachment loop assembly 254, as will be described in greater detail presently. The main strap  
10 member 260 of the sling may be of a conventional suitably strong synthetic textile webbing of a suitable width, such as 1 1/4 inch.

A forestock attachment loop assembly 264 surrounds the forestock 28 and is shown connected to the front sling swivel 132 of the automatic rifle 22 by a sling swivel attachment unit 266 which is somewhat different from the sling swivel attachment device 256, although a sling swivel attachment device 256 could be used instead. A front end portion 268 of the sling 250  
15 is interconnected with the forestock attachment loop  
20 assembly 264.

While the sling 250 is shown with the main strap member 260 on the left side of the automatic rifle it could also be mounted on the right side, as will be  
25 readily apparent, by simply reorienting various parts. Preferably, the sling 250 is made with components that will not be unnecessarily noisy in use, as will be understood from the following description.

The sling 250 is arranged in a three point  
30 sling configuration, in which a first portion 269 of the main strap member 260 of the sling extends rearwardly from the front end portion 268 to the quickly detachable sling end mounting loop assembly 258 alongside the buttstock 26. A second portion 270 of the main strap

member 260 thence extends forward alongside the first portion 269. The main strap member 260 in the rear end portion 252 of the sling 250 extends slidably through a pair of D-rings 271, 272 that are part of the quickly detachable sling end mounting loop assembly 258, as shown in FIGS. 25 and 26. An adjustable loop 274 in the second portion 270 of the main strap member 260 is formed and held adjustably by a tribar slide 276.

In FIGS. 21 and 22, the front end portion 268 of the sling 250 is shown attached to the forestock attachment loop assembly 264 by a loop 277 formed in the main strap member 260 and held by a tribar slide 278. A quickly detachable sling end mounting loop assembly 258 could instead be interposed between the loop 277 in the main strap member 260 and the forestock loop assembly 264 to facilitate more expeditious removal from the automatic rifle 22.

The loop 274 in the second portion 270 of the main strap member 260 is connected to an emergency release latching assembly 280 releasably latched to a short connecting section 282, which in turn is fastened to a quick release plate 284 similar to the quick release plate 70 described above. The quick release plate 284, connecting section 272, and latching assembly 280, together with the forward part of the loop 274, constitute a traveling end portion 286.

The traveling end portion 286 is normally held releasably but securely in a forward position near the front end portion 268 of the sling 250 by engaging the quick release plate 284 with an engagement member 288 mounted on the main sling strap member 260 a distance away from the extremity of the front end 268 of the sling 250. The user of the sling 250 may adjust the distance between the engagement member 288 and the forestock

attachment loop assembly 264 by adjusting the loop 277 held by the tribar slide 278.

The traveling end portion 286 can be released from the front end portion 268 to move rearwardly along 5 the first portion 269 of the main strap member 260 by operation of the quick release plate 284 in same manner described above for operation of the quick release plate 70 and the engagement member 76 in the sling 24, and that aspect of use of the sling 250 thus need not be described 10 here in detail.

Ordinarily, the sling 250 is utilized with the first portion 269 of the main strap member 260 extending alongside the forestock 28, receiver, and buttstock 26 of the automatic rifle 22, and the forwardly directed second 15 portion 270 of the main strap member 260 may be placed over the user's shoulder in a way similar to the placement of the sling 24 over the user's shoulder as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2. When the quick release plate 284 is operated to release the traveling end portion 286 and 20 allow it to move rearwardly along the first portion 269 of the main strap member 260, rearward movement of the traveling end portion 286 along the first portion 269 of the main strap member 260 allows the main strap member 260 to slide through the D-rings 271, 272 of the sling 250. The first portion 269 is 25 thus effectively lengthened between the attachments of the sling 250 to the forestock 28 and the buttstock 26, allowing the automatic rifle 22 to be moved somewhat more freely, as to be raised to a shooting position against 30 the non-preferred shoulder.

Releasing the traveling end 286 to slide rearwardly results in the first portion 269 being free to move further away from the side of the forestock 28 and receiver of the weapon, but shortens the second portion

270, and thus leaves less of the main strap member 260 between the quick release plate 284 and the buttstock attachment loop assembly 254 to extend around the user's body. The rearward part of the first portion 269 of the 5 main strap member 260, the remaining part of the second portion 270, and the traveling end portion 286 then extend around the body of the user as a sling loop of reduced circumference.

In an emergency, it may be desired to remove 10 the automatic rifle 22 or other weapon or article carried by the sling 250 quickly from the user's body, without having to slide the sling loop over other equipment being carried on the user's torso. In such a situation the emergency release latching assembly 280 may be operated 15 to disconnect the front end of the loop 274 from the first portion 269 of the main strap member 260.

For the emergency release latching assembly 280 to operate, the short connector section 282 may preferably be a short length of textile webbing similar 20 to that of the main strap member 260, appropriately secured to the quick release plate, as by sewing to form a loop 294 disposed around one bar of a tribar slide 284 and another loop 296 disposed through both of a pair of D-rings 290, 292. The D-rings 290, 292 are preferably 25 non-metallic and may be readily available D-rings of Delrin™ plastic. Use of both of the D-rings 290, 292 is not essential to operation of the sling or the emergency release latching assembly 280, but is preferred to ensure ample strength under unusual circumstances that might be 30 encountered by a soldier using the sling 250. The first portion 269 of the main strap member 260 also extends through both of the D-rings 290, 292, so that the short connector section 282 is normally kept closely alongside the main strap member 260, on the side of the main strap

member 260 opposite the engagement member 288, when the quick release plate 284 is engaged with the engagement member 288. The normal direction of tension in the short connecting section 282, resulting from the pull exerted  
5 on the D-rings 290, 292 by the emergency release latching assembly 280, thus ordinarily prevents unintended disengagement of the quick release plate 284 from the engagement member 288, even though the forward part of the loop 274 pulls the emergency release latching  
10 mechanism assembly 280 away from the first portion 269 of the main strap member 260, rather than lying alongside it, when the sling 250 is in use.

The emergency release latching assembly 280 includes a pair of D-rings 298, 300 held in a loop 302 of, for example, one inch flat tubular webbing material formed and held, as by appropriate stitching, in a first end of an elongate primary load-carrying member 304. The D-rings 298, 300 may be similar to the D-rings 290, 292, and while one of the D-rings 298, 300 is sufficient for  
15 normal use of the sling 250, the additional strength provided by both D-rings 298, 300 is preferred to assure ample strength under unusual circumstances and may provide an additional benefit by allowing the loop 274 in  
20 the main strap member 260 to bend with a larger radius of curvature.  
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The loop 274 extends slidably through the D-rings 298, 300, connecting the emergency release latching assembly 280 to the second portion 270 of the main strap member 260. The elongate primary load-carrying member 304 extends from the loop 302 to a flexible hinge portion 306 extending through and around  
30 the D-rings 290, 292 on the same side of the main strap member 260 as the engagement member 288. The D-rings 290, 292 thus act as connector loops by which the

emergency release latching assembly is interconnected releasably to the short connector section 282 and thus to the quick release plate 284.

Attached to the hinge portion 306 and extending alongside the elongate primary load-carrying member 304 toward the loop 302 is a substantially rigid tongue portion 308. An inner end 310 of the tongue 308 is interconnected with the hinge portion 306, while an outer end 312 of the tongue 308 extends toward the loop 302 when the emergency release latching assembly 280 is fastened in its normal configuration as shown in FIGS. 22 and 24. In one preferred embodiment of the emergency release latching assembly 280, the primary load bearing member 304, the hinge portion 306, and the tongue portion 308 include respective parts of a continuous length of suitably strong, flat, tubular woven webbing.

At least one and preferably a pair of keepers 314 encircle the primary load bearing member 304 and the tongue 308 to retain the tongue 308 closely alongside the primary load carrying member 304. The keepers 314 are loops and may, for example, be readily available molded Delrin™ plastic keepers. Preferably, the keepers 314 are secured to the primary load-carrying member 304 and kept near the hinge portion 306 by a flexible retainer 316, which may be an extension of the webbing of the primary load bearing member 304, fastened, as by being sewn, near the hinge portion 306.

The tongue 308 is made rigid by a core 318 that may be of sheet metal or an appropriate synthetic material kept in the appropriate positions within the tongue portion 308 as by stitching near the inner end 310 and stitching 322 at the outer end 312 of the tongue 308. While the stitching near the inner end 310 is desired merely to keep the core 318 in position within the tongue

308, the outer end 312 must be held securely about the core 318 by a fastening such as the stitching 322 or another securing device with ample strength to support a significant amount of the tension loading carried by the main primary load bearing member 304, since the flexible material of the hinge portion 306 is pulled around the D-rings 290, 292 by the primary load bearing member 304 when the emergency release latching assembly 280 is under tension.

10 Preferably the core 318 is of sheet stainless steel, in order to resist corrosion. Rather than simply being a straight length of flat sheet stainless steel that will fit within the tubular webbing material of the tongue 308, the core 318 preferably is bent to include a lower portion 324 offset far enough to define an open throat 326 adjacent the hinge portion 306 and between the tongue 308 and the primary load bearing member 304. The throat 326 receives the D-rings 290, 292, which function as connector loops through which the short connecting member 282 is connected to the loop 274 by the latching assembly 280.

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The tongue 308 preferably includes a detent to prevent unintended removal of the keepers 314 from engagement around the tongue 308. For example, a raised dome 328 is formed in the core 318 near the outer end 312 of the tongue 308. The dome 328 protrudes away from the primary load-carrying member 304 to retain the keepers 314 between the dome 328 and the offset portion 324. So that the emergency release latching assembly 280 will be less susceptible to wear, an opening 330 is preferably formed in the tubular textile webbing material of the tongue 308, exposing the raised dome 328 to be engaged directly by the keepers 314. The margin of the textile fabric surrounding the opening 330 is preferably treated

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to prevent fraying, as, in the case of the tubular webbing being of Nylon or another synthetic thermoplastic material, by heating the material defining the margins of the opening 330 to fuse the fibers together.

5           The emergency release latching assembly 280 is released by moving the keepers 314 in the direction of the arrow 332 to pass over the raised dome 328 or other detent and thence off the outer end 312 of the tongue 308. This frees the tongue 308 and allows the hinge 306 to flex to an extended orientation, with the outer end 312 revolving through an angle about the hinge portion 306 as shown in FIG. 23 to extend away from the primary load-carrying member 304. The tongue 308 is thus freed to be withdrawn from engagement with the D-rings 290, 292  
10          and thus be separated from the short connecting member 282, leaving the second portion 270, including the loop 274, free to move away from the first portion 269 of the main strap member 260 and thus away from the automatic rifle 22 or other object with which the sling 250 is  
15          being used, and freeing the sling from around the user.  
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As may be seen in FIGS. 25 and 26, the buttstock attachment loop assembly 254 includes an elongate stock-encircling strap 334 which may be of suitable woven webbing, for example flat tubular webbing  
25          one inch wide, with a respective toggle member 336, 337 such as a metal tribar slide attached at each of the opposite ends of the strap 334 by a respective loop formed in a portion of the strap material extending around the center bar of the particular tribar slide. An  
30          adjustment buckle, such as a tribar slide 338, is included to permit adjustment of the effective length of the strap 334, so that the buttstock attachment loop assembly can be fitted tightly to the buttstock 26 to provide a stable attachment of the sling 350 to the

automatic rifle 22. The buttstock attachment loop assembly 254 is preferably mounted on the buttstock 26 with the tribar slide 338 facing outwardly away from the buttstock 26, to prevent unnecessary noise.

5           Each of the toggle members 336, 337 is engaged in a respective one of a pair of D-rings 340, 342 attached to an elongate main flexible strap 344 of the sling swivel attachment device 256, which may be of suitable woven webbing. The two D-rings are attached to  
10          the flexible strap 344 facing oppositely away from each other and at right angles to the length of the flexible strap 344, as by being sewn into loops formed in a short length 345 of similar strap or webbing material, allowing the D-rings to pivot toward the stock-encircling strap  
15          334 as shown in FIGS. 25 and 26. The two D-rings 340, 342 are preferably non-metallic, and preferably molded plastic D-rings of suitable size and strength such as Delrin™ D-rings for webbing one inch wide, while the tribar slides 336, 337 are similarly for webbing one inch wide, so that each tribar slide can be passed through the  
20          respective D-ring 340, 342 in a lengthwise direction when the strap 334 is twisted as shown in FIG. 27. The tribar slides 336, 337, however, then toggle and engage the D-rings 340, 342 as stoppers and cannot pass through them  
25          when tension is applied to the stock-encircling strap 334 and brings the tribar slides 336, 337 into alignment as shown in FIG. 25. This manner of connection keeps the metal toggle members 336, 337 from striking the buttstock 26, thus helping keep the sling 350 quiet in use.

30          At the end of the stock-encircling strap 334 opposite the adjustment buckle 338, a sling strap receiving loop 346 is attached to the stock-encircling strap 334 adjacent to or spaced a predetermined small distance away from the toggle member 336, so as to

receive the sling strap at the desired position on the buttstock 28.

A pair of spacers such as molded plastic keepers 348 are engaged with the sling strap receiving loop 346 and encircle the stock-encircling strap 334, ensuring that the sling strap receiving loop 346 remains open to permit attachment of a sling strap when the stock-encircling strap 334 is fitted tightly around the buttstock 26 as shown in FIGS. 21 and 25.

When the stock-encircling strap 334 has been adjusted to a proper length to fit tightly on the buttstock 28 and has been mated with the sling swivel attachment device 266, the sling swivel attachment device 266 is used to attach the entire buttstock attachment loop assembly 254 to the sling swivel 170. The sling swivel attachment device 266 has a toggle member, preferably a metal tribar slide 347 secured in a loop of the strap member 344 around its center bar. A locking tab 349 is preferably a short length of woven webbing which may be thinner than the webbing material of the strap 344 and which is fastened to one of the outer side bars of the tribar slide 347. With the locking tab 349 extending away from the strap member 344 as shown in FIG. 26, the locking tab can pass through the sling swivel 170 followed by the tribar slide 347 in a transition position aligned generally parallel with the strap member 344. Once the tribar slide 347 has passed through the opening of the sling swivel 170 it can toggle into a stopper orientation as shown in FIG. 25, at which time the free end of the locking tab 349 is passed through the slot between the center bar of the tribar slide 347 and the bar to which the locking tab is not fastened. With the free end of the locking tab 349 then pulled between the sling swivel 170 and the tribar slide 347 as shown in

FIG. 25, the locking tab 349 prevents the toggle 347 from rotating back into a position aligned with the strap member 344 and presents enough thickness of the layers of the strap member 344 and the locking tab 349 to prevent the toggle member 347 from passing back through the sling swivel 170. The toggle member 347 and the strap member 344 are of a size small enough to pass through the opening of the sling swivel 170 without having to be twisted to an endwise orientation such as that of the stock-encircling strap 334 and its toggle member 336 illustrated in FIG. 27, and the length of the strap member 334 thus need only be long enough to permit the toggle member 347 to pass through the sling swivel 170 and toggle into its locking orientation as shown in FIG. 25.

As mentioned above, the main strap member 260 of the sling 250 is attached to the buttstock attachment loop assembly 254 by a quickly detachable sling end mounting loop assembly 258, which includes an elongate tension bearing strap member 350 such as a length of flexible webbing one inch wide, for example, having opposite first and second ends and having a length sufficient to fit through the sling strap receiving loop 346 and around the stock-encircling strap 334 when secured in position as shown in FIGS. 21 and 25. A loop 352 such as a molded plastic D-ring is carried on the first end of the tension bearing member 350, held securely in place as by a loop sewn or otherwise fastened in the material of the first end of the tension bearing member 350. A toggle element 354 such as a metal tribar slide is mounted at the opposite, second end of the tension bearing member 350 and has a size related to that of the loop 352 so that the toggle element can be passed through the loop in an endwise orientation, but cannot

pass through the loop when the tension bearing member 350 is under tension and orients the toggle element 354 to act as a stopper as shown in FIG. 25.

A strap receiving ring and preferably a pair of similar strap receiving rings, such as the D-rings 271, 272 large enough to hold the main strap member 260, are mounted on the intermediate portion of the tension bearing member 350 and face away from the buttstock 26 and forward with respect to the automatic rifle 22 when the sling end mounting loop assembly 258 is engaged with the buttstock attachment loop assembly 254. Preferably the pair of D-rings 271, 272 are mounted on the intermediate portion of the tension bearing member 350 and held in a desired position with respect to the tension bearing member 350 by a flexible retainer 360 such as a short length of ribbon-like fabric of suitable strength and of a width similar to or slightly less than that of the tension bearing member 350 and whose ends may be sewn to the tension bearing member 350 at spaced-apart locations. Preferably, a stabilizer such as a tribar slide 362 is located between the strap-receiving rings, with the tension bearing member 350 extending through one slot of the tribar slide and the retainer member 360 extending through the other slot of the tribar slide 362, so that the tribar slide substantially prevents the tension bearing member 350 of the sling mounting connector 258 from becoming twisted.

The toggle 354 is free to move to a connecting-disconnecting position aligned substantially parallel with the tension bearing strap member 350, as shown in FIG. 26. In that position it slides freely through the opening defined by the sling strap receiving loop 346. When the tension bearing strap member is in place extending through the sling strap receiving loop

346, the toggle is inserted through the D-ring 352 and allowed to assume the orientation shown in FIGS. 21 and 25 to connect or disconnect the sling end mounting loop assembly 258 to the buttstock attachment loop assembly 254.

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The forestock attachment loop assembly 264, as shown in FIGS. 22 and 29, is generally similar to the buttstock attachment loop assembly 254, except that a forestock-encircling strap member 366 is shorter than the corresponding buttstock-encircling strap member 334.

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Toggle members 336' and 337' thus are fastened to opposite ends of the forestock-encircling strap 366, and the assembly 264 includes a sling strap receiving loop 346' and an adjustment buckle 338'.

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As shown in FIGS. 21, 22, and 29, the forestock attachment loop assembly 264 includes the sling swivel attachment unit 266, which receives the toggle stopper members 336' and 337' of the forestock encircling strap 366 in D-rings 340', 342' the same way in which the buttstock-encircling strap 334 is received by the sling swivel attachment device 256 shown attached to the rear sling swivel 170. The sling swivel attachment unit 266, however, includes a short strap member 370 that is passed through the forward sling swivel 132 of the automatic rifle 22 and then engaged with the tribar slide buckle 372, held in place by a sewn or otherwise securely fastened loop formed in the opposite end of the strap 370, on the opposite side of the transversely-extending engagement D-ring holding strap member 374.

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The terms and expressions that have been employed in the foregoing specification are used therein as terms of description and not of limitation, and there is no intention, in the use of such terms and expressions, of excluding equivalents of the features

shown and described or portions thereof, it being recognized that the scope of the invention is defined and limited only by the claims that follow.

## CLAIMS

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1. A quickly releasable latching assembly for interconnecting adjacent portions of a sling, comprising:

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- (a) an elongate primary load carrying member having opposite first and second ends;
- (b) a substantially rigid tongue having opposite inner and outer ends;
- (c) a hinge portion extending between and interconnecting said first end of said primary load carrying member and said inner end of said tongue, said primary load carrying member, said tongue, and said hinge portion together defining a throat; and
- (d) a keeper mounted on said primary load carrying member and releasably engaging said tongue.

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2. The quickly releasable latching assembly of claim 1 wherein said keeper is a loop engaging said outer end of said tongue and slidably removable from engagement therewith.

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3. The quickly releasable latching assembly of claim 1 wherein said primary load carrying member, said tongue, and said hinge portion include respective portions of a continuous flexible strap member.

4. The quickly releasable latching assembly of claim 1 wherein said tongue includes a substantially